(a) whether it is a fact that Government do not have a population policy, even after 50 years of independence, whereas our population is rapidly increasing;

(b) if so, the specific reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that while 35 per cent of the people are living below the poverty line, with their number increasing at a very alarming rate, it is almost impossible for any economic policy to succeed unless the population growth is checked;

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(e) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) A statement on National Population was made in 1976 followed by a Statement of Policy on the Family Welfare Programme, made in 1977. A new draft Population Policy has now been prepared. This draft was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha in reply to Starred Question No. 262 answered on 10th December, 1996.

(c) to (e) Government recognises lowering the growth rate of population to be a priority area. Measures adopted to this end are promotion of the adoption of contraception, and provision of quality reproductive and child health services, supported by information, education and communication.

Registration of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) of States

194. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian degrees of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) are accorded recognition in India by Dental Council of India;

(b) if so, whether some States of the Union refuse registration of BDS for one or more years on the plea that it can follow a gazette notification;

(c) if so, whether some agitation was launched against the practice in Mumbai, Pune, Sangli, etc.; and

(d) if so, whether the issue has since been resolved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) The Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degree of an Indian University is recognised by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Dental Council of India and a gazette notification is issued to this effect.

(c) and (d) The Government of Maharashtra have reported that there is unrest amongst the dental graduates for the recognition of BDS degree of Pune University, Amaravati University and Shivaji University situated in Maharashtra. The Dental Council of India have recommended for the recognition of BDS degree of these universities. The matter is under active consideration of the Central Government.

Seizure of life saving drugs near RML Hospital

195. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that expensive life-saving drugs, worth lakhs of rupees, have been seized recently by police from a slum cluster near Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi;

(b) if so, whether an enquiry in this regard has been instituted; and

(c) if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) As per information furnished by the Police and the Medical Superintendent, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia